

## Parasha Tetzaveh You Shall Command

### We Need to be Heavenly Minded In Order to be Earthly Good

Torah: **Ex. 27:20-30:10 (Maftir: Deut. 25:17-19)**

**(1) 28:12** (take two onyx stones and engrave the **names of the sons of Israel**)

*Two stone tables of the Law, two tablets of precious stone with the tribes' names*

**(2) 28:35** (when he enters the sanctuary and when he leaves, **the bells will be heard** and he shall not die)

*Like on the holy the mountain, we cannot just waltz into G-d's presence*

**(3) 28:38** (Aaron shall **bear the sins** committed by the children of Israel while he performs all the holy offerings)

*Aaron wore holiness as he bore Israel's sins, in order for Israel to be holy*

**(4) 29:42** (it is there at the entrance to the tent **I will meet with you and speak with you**)

*G-d meets and speaks with us as we live our lives according to His schedule*

Haftarah: **I Sam. 15:1-34**

**(5) 15:9** (they kept the best of everything and only **utterly destroyed** that which was worthless and despised)

*We do not need the riches of Amalek (Mammon) in the service of the L-rd*

**(6) 15:22** (obedience is better than sacrifices and to **observe His Word** is better than the fat of rams)

*Forgiveness equips us to serve and to observe, to bring us back and put us back on track*

Brit Chadashah: Heb. 13:10-16

**(7) 13:14** (for we have **no permanent city**, but we seek that which is to come)

*All of our symbols and our celebrations need to focus on the world to come, which is our true home.*

The entire sacrificial system was set up for two reasons: to remind Israel of heavenly realities and to speak of true sacrifice which was to come, when G-d tabernacled among us and performed the true (versus symbolic) sacrifice, the ultimate cosmic intervention.

We will fight Amalek (Mammon), which is the battle for our allegiance to keep our daily focus on heavenly realities in our daily lives (I John 2:15, 16 – love not the world). If ever our life, the things of this world become our focus, our reason for living, if ever we lose our heavenly mind, we are no earthly good. Why? His Word teaches us how to live very practically in this life, as strangers and pilgrims on their way to our true Home.

As we observe Shabbat Zachor and Purim, let me ask you the cosmic question: are you heavenly minded in your earthly lives? Do you bring heavenly values and perspectives as you work, shop, live? Is your life an integrated spiritual whole? We have no other duty, no other calling, and no other job to do in this life.

Mishpocah (brethren) Zachor (remember), Chazak (be strong), hashhevaynu ha derek b' Mashiah (let us return to the way of the L-rd) for this is the whole duty of man, to be heavenly minded, so we can be good on earth.

## Introduction

As we celebrate Purim, and as we continue the countdown to Passover (the double cosmic intervention: Egypt and the Cross), on Shabbat Zachor, we need to understand three things.

The First thing, we have to remember our **collective, generational history** (our story, to the Jew first and also to the Greek). The major events in the life of the scattered descendants of Adam and Eve (of Noah), the real history of the world – not that sad litany of man's folly and the greatness which is always passing away – those generational sand castles we are always building on shore of life, and which the tide of death, time and human folly are always washing away.

Today we remember. But what should we remember? The Art Scroll Siddur (p. 177) lists six remembrances and I want to add a seventh. Let me review them for you:

### (1) REMEMBRANCE OF THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT (DEUT. 16:3)

When G-d despoiled the gods of the world and took His people out of this world (system). We do not belong to this world; we are only passing through (Ps. 23; 2 P. 2:11)

### (2) REMEMBRANCE OF RECEIVING THE TORAH AT MOUNT SINAI (DEUT. 4:9,10)

We have a mandate for living, a guide to true success, spirituality which matters – the key to understanding the purpose of life, the will of G-d, the spiritual hard drive of the universe, the whole duty of man d'or l'd'or (generation to generation).

### (3) REMEMBRANCE OF AMALEK'S ATTACK (DEUT. 25:17-19)

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but sometimes flesh and blood, inspired by our true adversaries (the adversary, the flesh and the world), attack us and we have to fight them off and even utterly destroy them. Careful, the principle applies, not the literal act. In the Gospel, our weapons are more powerful, because we have pity on the victims of Amalek (Mammon) and use the sword of the Spirit. How's your fight going?

### (4) REMEMBRANCE OF THE GOLDEN CALF (DEUT. 9:7)

I John 5:21 – idols, compromises, infidelities and sin always crouch at our door (Gen. 4:7). Sometimes we let it in and our spirituality becomes infected, carnal, diabolical (James 3:13-18) and corrupted, far from the purposes of G-d. Recognize, discern, cleanse, repent, be heavenly minded G-d's way. My next series after Pesach will have this heavenly focus (The Fruit of the Spirit, Learning to see it and do it G-d's way).

### (5) REMEMBRANCE OF MIRIAM (DEUT. 24:9)

Gal. 5:13-15 If you bite and devour, you will self destruct. The older brother and his critical, judgmental, unforgiving spirit need to back off and remember Matt. 6:14, 15 (forgiveness depends on forgiving)

### (6) REMEMBRANCE OF THE SABBATH (EXOD. 20:8)

The temporal imperative. All that we have, including our time, belongs to G-d and we must use all of our resources according to His blue print. Is He L-rd of your time? Your resources?

And finally, here is the seventh, a Messianic Jewish remembrance:

(7) REMEMBRANCE OF CALVARY (I COR. 11:23-26; 2 TIM. 2:8)

He cleansed the cosmos, backwards and forwards and wants us to focus on the price He paid, so we can understand the price He wants us to pay. He gave His life, shed His blood so that we might have life everlasting, and live every day as a pilgrimage, every week as an offering, every year as celebration, every event of our lives as a gift we offer to Him. How? By learning to live and to respond, inside our hearts and through our lives according to the double imperative of His word (believe/obey).

The next thing, we have to remember our personal story, our individual Purims (I Cor 10:13; 2 P. 2:9). This carries on from my last point. He will never leave us, nor forsake us, and He watches with interest as we face the challenges of our lives – both the victories and the defeats, as we learn to weave them into a heart song to Him. This is by far the greatest challenge of our lives, and the one we need to give our best to – and it is the one I struggle with the most (as each of us should).

I get side tracked, I am too often eaten up by regret, remorse, anger, fear, pain and with ambition, pride, lust and the success with which I crucify both the whiney side and the peacock side, will determine both my true spiritual health and my heavenly reward.

May the L-rd grant you good wrestling, as you learn to fight His way (Rom. 5:3-5)

Finally the last thing, we have to remember that the universe is unfolding as it should – that history is never off track, and so our lives should revolve around the Word, upon which history turns (Matt. 7:24-27). When we do this, there is a comfort, a healing which is uniquely ours, in the midst of the "whatever" we are passing through.

Let me read two passages: (2 Cor. 1:3, 4; and verses 9, 10). Our comfort remains intact even when we are so down, we feel like we are not going to make it, and when we are so pumped, we feel we could do it all, standing on our heads.

G-d's comfort comes when we see things His way, and we need to comfort each other, by helping each other to see it G-d's way. He does intervene, not to take us out of the lion's den, or the fiery furnace – nor out of the warehouse or the Pizza joint, but to help us see that we will always have what we need to meet our needs and to do His will.

Our needs and His will are never in conflict. Like Paul, sometimes we may be pushed beyond our ability to see the swamp for all the alligators, but even then we are never tempted beyond our ability. Sometimes our death in His service is a way of escape – martyrdom is a concept which is foreign to our success oriented positivistic modern society. Suffering is sometimes His will. And sometimes, despite all the positive thinking, the seminars, even the best laid plans of mice and Messianic believers gang aft aglay (screw up and leave us shattered, tattered, and badly shaken) How we behave in the deep valleys is as important to Him as how we revel on the mountain tops. Life sucks sometimes; He wants to teach us how to shine, even when we are shipwrecked.

## Conclusion

With that lovely thought in mind, **Tomorrow is Purim**, and so today, we will not be reading through the Megillah (scroll) of Esther, but I want to finish the meditation portion of our time together with a short summary of her story and then, joyfully we will observe the L-rd's table.

When the House of Jacob was languishing in captivity, two amazing things happened. Jews began to study the Word and, also, began to rise up into positions of authority and power. They were a people who could be trusted and this success has always brought them into conflict with enemies whose jealousy and hatred have tried to destroy them, generation by generation.

This is the story of one such attempt which ended in the first mass conversion to Judaism since the mixed multitude came out with Israel when they left Egypt.

A sweet young Jewess (Esther) got herself hitched to the Persian Emperor (Ahasureus), while her uncle (Mordecai) was becoming the chief executive officer of the empire. Mordy's boss, the royal executor (HAMAN the horrible) was upset because Mordy was not a brown noser, and refused to let HAMAN play power trips just to stroke his ego.

So one day, HAMAN thought of a great scheme to pay for all the mistakes he was making and all the money he was lining his pockets with. He would convince the king the Jews were involved in a worldwide plot to take over the world, and have them all robbed and killed. Then, everyone would bow down and kiss HAMAN where he usually sat down.

Mordy got wind of this evil nefarious plot, and our hero came up with a better one. He would let a woman figure out how to outsmart a man – something that happens every day. Esther knew she was playing for big stakes and if she lost, even though she was queen of the world, she would be killed and robbed along with her people.

So she convinced her husband to let her show him how beautiful and amazingly desirable she was – she cooked some good kosher food for him – not once, not twice but three times (where have I heard that before).

But she also wanted to trick HAMAN, so he felt she was a brown noser too. Silly man. At the third kosher feast, she told her hubby where she got her big nose from and that HAMAN was going to kill her too. He went outside for a smoke, to cool off. And HAMAN fell down on Esther's couch to plead for his life.

When the Emperor saw HAMAN trying to seduce his queen, he blew a gasket and order HAMAN hung on the gallows he had prepared for Mordy.

The queen knew that her job wasn't finished yet, because HAMAN's law still gave his allies the right to rob and kill all the Jews in the empire. So she asked the emperor for permission for the Jews to defend themselves in a fair fight.

The emperor said they could and on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Purim, just before the enemies were going to kill the Jews, the Jews rose up and killed and robbed them. Some of the people, when they saw this, decided to become Jews – not so they could kill people, but hey, great food, great reading material, and some pretty awesome women.

There are still many HAMANs running around this world. May the L-rd give us many Esthers and lots of Mordys. She even made a royal decree that is followed today- the memory of this deliverance must be remembered every year, just so we know that we are always on the winning team, even if we lose a few games along the way.

So don't let the HAMANs of your life push you around. Be a Mordy or an Esther, to the Jew first and also to the Greek, or Persian, or whatever.

Chag Purim and Y'ma Sh'mo HAMAN d'or l'd'or. Ameyn.